

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS**

#### **Contents**

#### **CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE DEPARTURE FROM THE UNITED STATES**

#### **THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW WHILE IN A FOREIGN AREA**

#### **RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES**

Allowances exist as incentives for overseas service, and as assistance to Foreign Service families in meeting the expenses incurred in moving and living overseas. All allowances, except the Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) during an evacuation, are payable to the *employee* only. Most allowances and benefits are not subject to federal income tax. However, Post Differential, Difficult to Staff Incentive Differential and Danger Pay are considered extra compensation and are subject to tax. They are included in gross income on the employee's Form W-2.

When you receive your assignment, you will learn if you are eligible to receive allowances. Each category of allowance is discussed below, but you will need explicit confirmation on which of these are applicable to you at your new post. The allowances discussed below are followed by a reference number from *The Department of State Standardized Regulations* (DSSR). This and other publications from the Office of Allowances explain the regulations in more detail and can be obtained by visiting or telephoning that office or checking [www.state.gov/m/a/als](http://www.state.gov/m/a/als).

In addition, unique allowances exist for specific posts and situations. Information on these should be obtained from the employee's assignment office or the administrative officer at your post abroad. Information about specific allowances can also be found in DSSR 920, Post Classification and Payments Table now also available on the State Department's Internet site (<http://www.state.gov>). If you have difficulty obtaining information on specific allowances and benefits, locate the proper information source from the functional listing provided in the *Directory of Services* in the appropriate foreign affairs agency telephone book.

## **CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE DEPARTURE FROM THE UNITED STATES**

### **ADVANCE OF PAY ALLOWANCE (DSSR 850)**

Advance of Pay is intended to ease the financial burdens of the transition period, by ensuring that funds are available to meet required expenses and emergencies. It allows up to three months advance pay upon the assignment of the employee to a post in a foreign area. The amount advanced must be paid back to the Department over a maximum of 18 pay periods. The advance of pay can be received only after getting travel orders, but not more than 45 days before departure, or within 60 days after arrival at post. Advance of pay may also now be authorized for medical emergencies that may arise while assigned to the foreign area.

Foreign affairs agency employees claim the advance of pay through the payroll system, using JF-55.

### **FOREIGN TRANSFER ALLOWANCE (DSSR 240 AND SECTION 960 FTA WORKSHEET)**

The Foreign Transfer Allowance is provided for extraordinary, necessary, and reasonable expenses, not otherwise compensated for, but incurred by an employee incidental to leaving the United States and to getting established at a post overseas. The foreign transfer allowance is composed of four elements: a miscellaneous expense portion, a lump-sum wardrobe expense portion, a pre-departure subsistence expense portion, and a lease-penalty expense portion. This allowance is not subject to federal tax.

#### **Miscellaneous Expenses**

- (1) This allowance is provided to partially reimburse the employee for certain extraordinary expenses incurred because of changing residences, such as disconnecting and connecting or converting appliances, equipment, and utilities; cutting and fitting rugs, drapes, curtains (but not the purchase of new items); utility fees not offset by eventual refunds; auto registrations, driver's licenses, and similar fees; personal cable and telephone costs attributable to the relocation exclusive of such costs intended to be reimbursed by travel per diem; agent fees paid directly to an agent for housing; and transporting of pets to the foreign area. *(Note: This is only what the airline is charging to transport the pet—no other auxiliary costs. Due to budgetary constraints, the State Department is not reimbursing for quarantine costs at this time).*
- (2) It is granted only on transfers involving a foreign relocation (that is, from the United States to foreign or foreign to foreign).
- (3) For an employee without family, a flat amount of \$500 or one week's salary (whichever is less) is payable without receipts. An employee with family may receive a flat payment of \$1000 or two weeks' salary (whichever is less) without

receipts. Claims above these flat amounts must be supported by receipts for the entire miscellaneous expense claim. The maximum amounts which may be granted for the miscellaneous expense portion is one week's salary for an employee without family or two weeks' salary for an employee with family, with a maximum salary ceiling of Grade GS-13, step 10.

### **Pre-departure Subsistence Expenses**

- (1) This allowance is applicable to costs incurred for temporary lodging, meals (including tips), laundry, dry cleaning and pressing for up to 10 days after moving out of permanent quarters and before departure from a **post of assignment in the United States** to a post in a foreign area. Subsistence in the foreign area is covered under the Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA).
- (2) It is not applicable to employees transferred directly from a **temporary duty station** in the United States to a foreign area. However, if the new hire is here on per diem but has family still at where they were hired from and still in their permanent home, once the employee gets orders and the family vacates the permanent residence, he/she may claim the subsistence portion of FTA (Foreign Transfer Allowance) for those family members. *Note: The 10 days may be spent anywhere in the United States, however, the employee and/or family members MUST RETURN to the U.S. post of assignment (or where employee was hired from if family members) PRIOR TO commencing travel on orders to the foreign post.*
- (3) The initial occupant of temporary quarters, age 12 or older, may receive up to the full per diem rate (including a high locality rate) in effect for the locality from which transferred (*or hired from*). Each other occupant age 12 or older may receive up to three-fourths of the rate established for the first person. Children under 12 may receive up to one-half of the rate established for the first person. The FTA 960 Worksheet provides room to calculate the family daily maximum. *Note: For tandem couples both employees may receive the initial occupant rate, but the 10 days must run concurrently, not consecutively, unless approved by the agency.*
- (4) Under the actual subsistence method of reimbursement, receipts are required for lodging. Daily meals, laundry and dry cleaning expenses must be itemized, however, no receipts are required. There is also a partial flat rate reimbursement option available as of 1/1/2000 (not currently available in the FAM for foreign affairs agencies). See DSSR 240 for more detail.
- (5) An advance may be drawn on this allowance, but it must be claimed on the SF-1190 after arrival at the new foreign post of assignment.

### **Wardrobe Expenses**

- (1) A lump-sum wardrobe expense allowance is granted only for transfers between tropical (zone "3") and cold climatic zones (zone "1"). The conterminous United

States (zone “2”) is never included. It is intended to cover a portion of the additional clothing required because of the extreme change in climate.

- (2) Amounts payable are \$450 (employee without family), \$750 (with one family member), and \$1000 (with two or more family members).
- (3) The wardrobe expense portion applies to relatively few foreign transfers.
- (4) The non-receipted amounts of the transfer allowance may be authorized in advance. The allowance must be claimed after arrival at the new post.
- (5) It is paid in a lump sum.

### **Lease Penalty Expenses**

- (1) This portion is to help offset the expense of a lease penalty unavoidably incurred by an employee due to an agency-generated action and may be claimed in the United States or foreign post.
- (2) Reimbursement shall not exceed the amount required by the specific terms of a rental contract signed by the employee as a prior condition of obtaining the lease, or the equivalent of three months’ rent, whichever is less.
- (3) Amounts may be reimbursed only after an appropriate authorizing official certifies in writing that all criteria have been met. Criteria are shown in both DSSR 242.4 and 960 FTA worksheet.

(Also see DSSR Section 960 for FTA worksheet.)

### **SEPARATE MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (DSSR 260, Section 960 Omnibus Exhibit)**

This allowance has three distinct categories—involuntary, voluntary, and transitional. It is available to employees who have to maintain families elsewhere other than at posts of assignment. It is not subject to federal taxes.

**Involuntary Separate Maintenance Allowance (SMA)** may be granted when an agency determines that adverse, dangerous, unhealthful living conditions, such as lack of medical facilities, warrant exclusion of your family from your post of assignment or when the agency determines that there is a need to exclude family members from accompanying an employee to the area. Involuntary SMA may be paid until age 21 for children.

**Voluntary SMA** may be authorized when there are special family needs or hardship such as career, family health, or education. It, however, excludes legal separation or divorce.

Voluntary SMA may be paid until age 18 for children unless they are in secondary school.

**Transitional SMA** may be authorized when a post converts to an unaccompanied status following the termination of an evacuation when family members are not allowed to return to post. It is intended to assist family members with the extraordinary expenses of temporary commercial housing and is paid for a maximum of 90 days. Family members will be paid involuntary SMA following the termination of transitional SMA.

- (1) To be considered an eligible member of your family for the separate maintenance allowance, your parent, brother, or sister must have resided with you for at least one year prior to the separation for which the allowance is requested.
- (2) Separate maintenance is paid only after an agency determines that it is appropriate and only for family members who would normally reside with the employee at the foreign post of assignment.
- (3) The allowance is not intended to cover all expenses for the family member not residing at post, but to assist in offsetting the additional expense of maintaining a separate household.
- (4) Family members for whom the allowance is paid may visit your post for up to 30 days without reduction in the allowance. (Such travel would be at the expense of your family.)
- (5) After **voluntary** separate maintenance is elected, only one change in status for each affected family members is permitted during your tour of duty, although there is an exception when an official evacuation from post is involved [see DSSR 264.2(2) exception]. Check your agency for definition of tour of duty. (Note this does not apply to involuntary SMA.)
- (6) Family members may not return to post before the 90-day separation requirement has lapsed or within the last 90 days of the tour of duty, unless meeting the specific exemptions in DSSR 262.4. (A new exception was added 9/26/03 for EFMs on involuntary separation.)
- (7) Flat amounts are paid to cover some of the additional costs of maintaining a spouse and/or family member(s) in the United States while the employee is at a post in a foreign area. The following are the usual procedures for payment:
  - The employee must apply for SMA with the appropriate agency official, (with State Department that will be the Executive Director of the regional bureau.)
  - Rates vary by the number of eligible family members of the employee.
  - It is paid with biweekly salary to the employee.

- The allowance is not taxable.

### **TRAVEL PER DIEM ALLOWANCE: FOREIGN AREAS (DSSR 925 and 6FAM 150)**

The Travel Per Diem allowance for foreign areas is a payment to cover the cost of lodging and meals at adequate, suitable, and moderately priced facilities, plus cost for mandatory service charges, such as tips and taxes. It is also paid for necessary incidentals such as laundry and dry cleaning for employees and eligible family members. (Expenses relating to actual transportation, baggage, and household effects do not fall within this category.)

- (1) Per diem rates are based primarily on costs reported in the Hotel and Restaurant Report (Form DS-2026) submitted by foreign posts.
- (2) Payment is provided to employees and eligible family members for daily expenses while on temporary travel status on official business away from an official post of assignment.
- (3) Reimbursement may be authorized based on Actual Subsistence Expenses for travel involving special or unusual circumstances. The reimbursement of actual and necessary itemized subsistence expenses shall not exceed 300% of the applicable foreign travel per diem allowance (rounded to the next higher dollar).
- (4) Per diem for foreign areas is calculated in two portions: the maximum lodging amount and a portion for meals and incidental expenses.
- (5) Receipts for lodging are necessary to support actual expenses for claims.
- (6) Per diem allowance is paid following submission of a travel voucher.
- (7) It is not subject to taxes.

### **THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW WHILE IN A FOREIGN AREA**

#### **TEMPORARY QUARTERS SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE (DSSR 120 and Section 960 TQSA Worksheet)**

The Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA) is available to pay the costs of temporary quarters, meals, and laundry expenses after initial arrival at a foreign post or upon final departure from the post.

- (1) This allowance is paid for reasonable costs for periods up to 90 days after first arrival at post, and when authorized, for 30 days immediately preceding final departure from

post. The 90- and 30-day periods may be extended up to an additional 60 days when the head of an agency determines that compelling reasons beyond the control of the employee require continued occupancy of temporary quarters.

- (2) It is not paid concurrently with the living quarters allowance (see exception at 124.1) and post (cost-of-living) allowance.
- (3) It is intended to assist in covering the average cost of adequate but not elaborate or unnecessarily expensive accommodations in a hotel, pension, or other transient-type quarters at the post of assignment, plus reasonable meal and laundry expenses.
- (4) Actual expenses are reimbursed up to a maximum rate, based on the foreign post per diem rate as shown in Section 925 of the Standardized Regulations. Maximum rates payable also depend upon the age and number of family members.
- (5) Submit evidence of daily costs at post on SF-1190.

(Also see DSSR section 960 TQSA worksheet).

#### **LIVING QUARTERS ALLOWANCE (DSSR 130, 920 and 960 LQA Worksheet)**

The Living Quarters Allowance is authorized to cover the annual cost of suitable and adequate living quarters for the average employee and family, if government quarters are not provided at post.

- (1) This allowance is not paid concurrently with the temporary quarters subsistence allowance (see exception at DSSR 132.41). It is not paid if government quarters are available.
- (2) It covers the average employee's costs for rent, heat, light, electricity, water, and trash and garbage disposal (DSSR section 960 LQA worksheet).
- (3) The allowance is designed to be paid at an amount equal to the employee's allowable expenditures up to the applicable maximum rate listed by foreign post in Section 920.
- (4) The maximum rates vary by post costs, grade, and family size.
- (5) It is paid with biweekly salary; it is not subject to federal income tax.

#### **EXTRAORDINARY QUARTERS ALLOWANCE (DSSR 138, 920 and 960 EQA Worksheet)**

This assists with lodging and meal costs when it is determined that an employee and eligible family members must necessarily vacate their permanent quarters due to U.S. Government renovations/repairs or other unhealthy or dangerous conditions.

## **POST (“COST-OF-LIVING”) ALLOWANCE (SR 220, 920 and 960 Omnibus Exhibit)**

Post (cost-of-living) Allowance is authorized to reimburse for certain excess costs and to compensate for serving at a post where the cost of living (excluding the cost of quarters and the cost of eligible family members’ education) is substantially higher than in the Washington, DC, area.

- (1) It is determined by biennial review of reports from posts and reviewed every two weeks as international exchange rates fluctuate. (Posts experiencing hyper-inflation are not adjusted for incremental exchange rate fluctuations.) Prices reported are compared to Washington prices collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- (2) This allowance is a percentage of spendable income—that part of the salary available after deductions for taxes, life insurance, retirement contributions, estimated housing costs, and savings.
- (3) It is payable upon arrival of employee or family at post unless they are receiving a temporary quarters subsistence allowance. (Use SF-1190.)
- (4) It varies by salary and family size.
- (5) It is paid with biweekly salary; it is not subject to federal income tax.

## **POST DIFFERENTIAL (DSSR 500, 920 and 960 Omnibus Exhibit)**

The Post Differential, often referred to as a hardship differential, is designed to compensate for serving at a post with extraordinarily difficult or notably unhealthful conditions or excessive physical hardships. It serves as an incentive in recruiting and retaining personnel for locations where unusual hardship conditions exist.

- (1) This post differential is provided only to employees whose foreign residence is attributable to their employment by the U.S. Government. (That is, they are eligible to receive a living quarters allowance).
- (2) It is paid to employees on temporary detail to one or more hardship posts from the 43rd day on such detail or to employee on extended TDY from the United States. (Note the exception for footnote “n” of Section 920, as there are currently several posts listed.)
- (3) The benefit is granted only at those posts where the degree of hardship is in excess of that which employees are expected to accept as a necessary part of overseas service.



- (4) It is subject to federal income tax.
- (5) It is paid with biweekly salary.
- (6) Posts having extremely adverse conditions carry a maximum of 25 % differential. Posts having lesser degrees of hardship have differentials of 20%, 15%, 10%, and 5%.

### **DIFFICULT TO STAFF INCENTIVE DIFFERENTIAL (DSSR 1000)**

#### Highlights of the DTSID:

The head of agency or designee may grant the DTSID to an employee assigned to a differential post of 15%, 20% or 25% when especially adverse conditions of environment warrant additional pay as a recruitment and retention incentive to fill the employee's position at that post.

The amount of the DTSID is 15% of basic compensation and is subject to Federal income tax.

Restriction (in Law): The combination of Danger Pay for the post of assignment plus the DTSID cannot exceed 25% of basic compensation. Therefore, if Danger Pay becomes effective at a post (Danger Pay is 15, 20 or 25%), the DTSID would be reduced or eliminated while Danger Pay is in effect.

### **DANGER PAY ALLOWANCE (DSSR 650, 920 and Section 960 Omnibus Exhibit)**

Danger pay was initially mandated in the Foreign Service Act of 1980. This allowance was authorized to provide additional compensation above basic compensation for service at foreign posts on the basis of civil insurrection, civil war, terrorism, or wartime conditions that threaten physical harm or imminent danger to the health and well-being of employees.

- (1) Danger pay does not apply where economic crime is the chief element of threat.
- (2) It may not exceed 25% of the basic compensation of employee.
- (3) It is subject to federal income tax.
- (4) This allowance may be paid to part-time and temporary duty employees, as well as to full-time employees.
- (5) The amount of danger pay allowance shall be at the rates of 15%, 20%, and 25%, based on the determined level of danger and the presence of non-essential personnel and eligible family members.

(Also see DSSR Section 960 omnibus exhibit)

**EDUCATION ALLOWANCE (DSSR 270, 920 and Section 960 Education Worksheet; see also DSSR 600)**

The Education Allowance is available to assist in meeting the uncompensated, necessary, and extraordinary expenses of educating eligible family member children while serving in a foreign country. It is designed to help in providing adequate elementary and secondary education for children while overseas, in place of services normally provided without charge by public schools in the United States.

- (1) It is granted at posts where the cost of adequate schooling exceeds the cost in a U.S. public school, grades K-12.
- (2) If adequate schools are available at post and the child is sent to school away from post, no higher allowance than the at-post rate will be paid. If some grades at post are inadequate, then an additional higher boarding school allowance is established for the inadequate grades. If a school at post is adequate and the child goes away from post, tuition, room and board and periodic transportation to and from post may be reimbursed.
- (3) In addition to the at-post rate (*when a child attends a school at the foreign post*), a supplementary instruction allowance up to a maximum amount per school year may be paid. Its purpose is: (a) instruction in basic American subjects or advanced placement courses not offered by the local school; (b) necessary language tutoring if the local school offers its curriculum in a foreign language; (c) to provide additional instruction to enable the student to enter a grade or remain in the same grade in school (see DSSR 274.12a and 276.9 for amount and allowable expenses); (d) to provide additional instruction to complete successfully the current school year for a student returning to post following authorized/ordered evacuation; and (e) instruction for a Gifted and Talented (GT) academics-only program if the school does not offer a GT or equivalent program. (See DSSR 274-12a and 276.9 for amount and allowable expenses). To be reimbursable, the supplementary instruction must be given by a competent person other than the employee or a family member.
- (4) If local schools are inadequate, a higher allowance (away from post) will assist with costs of tuition, room and board, and periodic transportation for adequate schooling elsewhere. Travel may be allowed between the school and the home of a designated relative or family friend or to join the parent at any location as long as the expense does not exceed the cost between post and school. The away-from-post allowance up to the maximum may be used in these circumstances for boarding schools in the United States or abroad. If the student attends a public school in the United States and resides with friends or relatives

other than parents, a set room and board cost, nonresident public school fees and periodic transportation to/from post, and local school transportation costs to/from private residential or non-dormitory facility on school days are allowable up to the maximum rate of the allowance.

- (5) In situations where school attendance is not practical, an allowance for correspondence courses covers the cost of tuition, books and supplies, airmail postage and on-line advisory service for lesson correspondence and material. See DSSR 274.12b for amounts and DSSR 277.3 for allowable expenses.
- (6) If the school at post charges allowable non-refundable one-time fees (e.g., registration, matriculation, building), the fees may be granted in addition to the basic allowance.
- (7) A special needs child or a child with a learning disability may receive a special allowance for education either at post or away from post without reference to the rates set for that post. See DSSR 274.12c for rates and DSSR 276.8 for allowable expenses.
- (8) You must apply for the education allowance at post (SF-1190 and DSSR section 960 Education Allowance Worksheet).
- (9) The education allowance is paid to the employee as reimbursement upon presentation of receipts. It may be granted in installments or a lump sum as necessary. The full allowance may be advanced up front only if the school requires full initial payment, or if there is a savings to the U.S. government.
- (10) No education allowance is available if the child attends school in the United States while a parent with legal custody also resides in the United States.
- (11) The supplementary instruction allowance has recently been expanded to ensure that (a) children successfully complete the school year upon return to post after the end of an evacuation and (b) a gifted and talented (GT) equivalent program exists.
- (12) Employees may be reimbursed against the school "at post" for education costs when the school has established a program to provide continuity of education via the Internet (DSSR 600, Evacuation Allowance).

## **EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL (DSSR 280)**

Educational Travel covers annual round-trip travel expenses of children from post *to a school in the United States* only for secondary, undergraduate college, or post-secondary vocational or technical school education.

- (1) It covers actual expenses for transportation of the student at lowest available fare rates, travel per diem, and expenses for unaccompanied personal baggage between the employee's foreign post and the school. At the election of the employee, in lieu of the transportation of the unaccompanied personal baggage (UAB), the costs incurred to store the baggage at or in the vicinity of the school during the dependent's annual trip between the school and the employee's duty station may be paid or reimbursed to the employee up to the amount of the cost to transport the UAB.
- (2) Either the educational travel or the education allowance may be paid for secondary students. It is generally advantageous to choose the education allowance if eligible.
- (3) To be eligible for educational travel, the student must be enrolled for a full program in an undergraduate college or post-secondary vocational or technical school *in the United States* and must not have reached his/her 23rd birthday. (This age ceiling can be extended further if military service intervenes, on a year-for-year basis.) The age limit for high school travel is up to the 21st birthday.
- (4) The annual trip for educational travel is defined as one round trip at any time within any one 12-month period of the eligible child's schooling. Any portion of the round trip not taken in the 12-month period does not accrue to the subsequent period.
- (5) Educational travel is available in addition to any other travel for which the child may be eligible (i.e., home leave, transfer, and rest and recuperation).
- (6) Educational travel may commence from either school or post. If travel to post is at the U.S. Government's expense, the child must reside at post seven consecutive days before commencing educational travel from post.
- (7) A return trip to post is not authorized under educational travel where the employee's transfer to the United States or home leave is anticipated within 30 days of the scheduled date of the child's departure for the post.
- (8) The travel-authorizing officer generally writes educational travel orders at post.
- (9) Educational travel is available when a foreign school is attended for less than a year by a full-time student (at a U.S. college) participating in a program approved by the U.S. school. Reimbursement is limited to the lesser of either the actual cost of transportation or the cost of transportation between post and the U.S. school.

- (10) A recent change in the law stipulates that employees will be reimbursed for storage of the student's unaccompanied air baggage instead of having it shipped back to post from the student's school.

(Also see DSSR section 960 Omnibus Exhibit, Educational Travel)

### **REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCE (SR 300)**

This allowance may be granted to American or Foreign Service national employees or to adult family members. Its purpose is to defray expenditures for official entertaining and related authorized activities of employees in establishing and maintaining those relationships valuable to the U.S. Government in furthering foreign policy objectives.

Allowable activities include entertainment of a protocolary nature, such as on the Fourth of July; entertainment of members of the U.S. Government other than solely those who are members of the Executive Branch and their families; and entertainment by employees to promote personal relationships that are necessary to the performance of their duties.

This allowance is available under the following conditions:

- (1) Only those expenses incurred abroad are allowable.
- (2) Claims not covered due to insufficient funds may be tax deductible, when expenses are properly certified by appropriate authorizing officials. (See IRS Publication 516.)
- (3) Because of variable factors, posts are not classified for representation allowances nor is a table of rates prescribed. Rates are based on an annual review and analysis of each post's requirements based upon previous expenditures, cost of living at post, political and economic importance of post, and the relative requirements of the several categories of personnel at diplomatic missions.
- (4) Vouchers for previously authorized expenses must be submitted.

### **OFFICIAL RESIDENCE EXPENSES (DSSR 400)**

In order to carry out the representational functions cited earlier, a principal representative at a post often requires reimbursement for those unusual housekeeping expenses incurred in the operation and maintenance of an official residence. Keeping official residences staffed and operational during intervals such as the recall or transfer of the principal representative also requires official expenses.

The Secretary of State has been given authority to designate the positions at post that qualify as principal representative positions. Generally, the principal representative must

personally pay 3.5% of his or her salary toward usual household expenses, on an annual basis, unless total expenses are less than the 3.5%.

Reimbursement of the official residence expenses (ORE) is based on the normal living pattern of principal representatives at the posts. It is also based on the difference between normal housekeeping expenses and the cost the principal representative is required to bear and the size and condition of the official residence at the post. It should be noted that:

- (1) reimbursement is paid in a lump sum to the employee; and
- (2) vouchers must be submitted for specific expenses.

The above information answers the allowance questions most frequently asked by Foreign Service employees and their family members. There are other benefits available to you, such as a consumables allowance, a layette allowance, and medical travel allowance, which are not covered in this section. If unable to locate the allowance information that applies to you in the *Standardized Regulations* or the *Foreign Affairs Manual*, you should be able to locate specific information at the Office of Allowances, or from your personnel officer or the administrative staff at your post.

## **RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES**

### **HOME SERVICE TRANSFER ALLOWANCE (DSSR 250)**

The Home Service Transfer Allowance provides benefits for those persons returning from a foreign post assignment to the United States.

It defrays expenses incurred by an employee in establishing a residence in the United States after the employee agrees, in writing, to serve 12 months in U.S. Government service.

- (1) The Miscellaneous Expenses and Wardrobe Expenses portions are processed under the same procedures and guidelines as discussed above in the Foreign Transfer Allowance. Because the wardrobe expense portion is payable only between widely varying climatic zones, it is not available on transfers to the conterminous U.S.
- (2) The Subsistence Expense portion offsets costs of temporary lodging, meals, dry cleaning, and laundry for up to 60 days. This may be extended for up to an additional 60 days when, in the judgment of the head of an agency, there are compelling reasons beyond the control of the employee.
- (3) Actual expenses are reimbursed up to a predetermined maximum rate, based on the standard CONUS (Continental United States) per diem rate (not the rates

established by locality). Maximum rates payable also depend upon the age and number of family members. There is also a fixed rate reimbursement not adopted in the FAM for foreign affairs agencies.

- (4) The Lease Penalty Expense portion helps offset the expense of a lease penalty unavoidably incurred abroad by an employee receiving the living quarters allowance as a result of a transfer to the United States. Reimbursement and certification are as discussed earlier under Foreign Transfer Allowance.
- (5) Funds for the four portions of the Home Service Transfer Allowance may be advanced by the authorized disbursing officer. Final claim and payments are made upon application (SF-1190); supporting receipts are required. The Home Service Transfer Allowance is claimed after arrival at the new U.S. post of assignment (SF-1190).

## **EVACUATION PAYMENTS (SR 600)**

Authority is granted to facilitate payment of salaries, post differential, and allowances in the event of an emergency evacuation or authorized departure of employees or their eligible family members, or both, from post because of military action or because of imminent danger to their lives.

Travel expense allowances are granted to and from the designated safe haven, usually the continental United States. Your eligible family members may travel to any place in the continental United States, while employees are authorized travel only to Washington or another duty station.

Airfreight may be authorized for both departure from and return to post. Although conditions may preclude shipments from post, shipments back to post may still be authorized. In lieu of an airfreight shipment when evacuating from a post, an air freight replacement allowance may be authorized.

Following arrival at the authorized safe haven, a daily local transportation allowance is authorized to first evacuee and varies depending of family size.

The **Subsistence Expense Allowance** (SEA, DSSR 632) commences on the date following arrival at the authorized safe haven and terminates when the evacuation is ended, or on the 181st day after the evacuation order is issued, whichever arrives first. The rate of payment varies according to your use of commercial or non-commercial lodging, and reduces after 30 days following arrival at the authorized safe haven. A higher lodging amount may be approved for special family composition. The following conditions therefore exist:

- (1) The maximum period covered is 180 days.

- (2) It provides salary advance for 30 days, if necessary, and continuance or adjustment of allowances at evacuated post, depending upon circumstances.
- (3) Salary will continue and certain allowances may continue to be paid for up to 180 days, but regulations provide for terminating or reducing the post differential, danger pay and most allowances after various periods of absence from the post and under other varying conditions. See DSSR 621.
- (4) Special allowances may be paid to offset the direct added expenses incident to the evacuation. These expenses normally are those incurred for travel, meals, lodging, children's education, and miscellaneous items.
- (5) It is paid by various methods to employee, adult eligible family members, or a designated representative of the employee.

Payment of an education allowance may be affected by evacuation, but the circumstances are so specific that you should refer to DSSR 633.

Under educational travel, the official safe haven replaces the post as the travel destination from school, if the parent so elects.